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RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT IMMEDIATE 4764
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RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK IMMEDIATE 4757
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE IMMEDIATE
RUEHHE/AMEMBASSY HELSINKI IMMEDIATE 0871
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 0733
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE 5800
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM IMMEDIATE 0761
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT IMMEDIATE 4879
RUEHNA/DEA HQS WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 USNATO 000609

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STATE/INL, EUR/RPM, EUR/ACE, DEA/ASAC/TRNG FOR D. BRACCIO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/05/2017

TAGS: [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [RU](#)

SUBJECT: ACTION REQUEST: FUNDING TO CONTINUE NATO-RUSSIA
COUNTER-NARCOTICS PROJECT

REF: PETERSON/SMYTH EMAILS

Classified By: Ambassador Victoria Nuland for reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) ACTION REQUEST: See paragraph 10.

¶2. (C) SUMMARY: Russia, Allies, contributing partners, and recipient countries enthusiastically support the continuation of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) 2006-07 pilot project to train counter-narcotics officials in Central Asia and Afghanistan in 2008-09. This project advances the U.S. policy goals of countering the flow of Afghan narcotics and promoting cooperation with Russia on an area of growing mutual concern. It is one of the few projects in the NRC that has not been derailed, frozen, or curtailed by the Kremlin's increasingly difficult positions. Therefore, post requests funding in 2008-09 at the same levels in real terms as 2006-07 (i.e., USD 600,000 total with USD 300,000 from the Department of Defense and USD 300,000 from the Department of State). In the past, French "red lines" on non-military projects at NATO have hindered the development of this type of project. We should take advantage of newfound French interest in this project to consolidate it. End summary.

BACKGROUND

¶2. (SBU) In 2006-07, NATO-Russia Council (NRC) teams trained 330 drug enforcement officials from Afghanistan and all five Central Asian republics. Trainers from Turkey, Greece, UK, Hungary, Romania, and Italy joined DEA and/or Russian-led teams to conduct the training. The 2006-07 pilot phase of the project will conclude with the DEA-led training of Afghan officials in Kabul in December; three trainers from NATO partner Finland will assist in this training (NOTE: Sweden is closely watching Finnish participation in considering its own participation. End note).

13. (SBU) The NRC has approved plans to continue the pilot project into 2008-09, and the NATO International Staff is calling for renewal of contributions. Of the USD 600,000 U.S. contribution in 2006-07, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) provided USD 300,000 to fund DEA training costs and travel-related expenses for five rounds of two-week training courses in Afghanistan and Central Asia. The State Department's Bureau of International Law Enforcement (INL) has provided USD 300,000 to the NRC budget to cover the project administration costs for 2006-07. The INL contribution to the NRC budget is 21.3 percent of the project's costs (\$1.4 million), which is in line with the traditional U.S. contribution to NATO projects. Russia estimates to have spent USD 200,000 in 2006-07 to support its training teams, and has already approved another USD 200,000 for 2008-09.

14. (C) Allies and Russia have widely praised the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) counter-narcotics pilot project for building cooperation in the fight against Afghan narcotics. Allies, as well as contributing partners (i.e., Finland), are enthusiastic about contributing to this successful project, citing the opportunity to work with DEA as a major motivating factor. In a high-level steering meeting on October 22, representatives from the five central Asian Republics and Afghanistan lauded the project for enhancing the technical abilities of their drug enforcement efforts, and helping them to create a network of drug enforcement contacts. While Russia has curtailed or frozen its participation in other NRC committees in 2006, it has sought to expand its participation in the counter-narcotics project. In 2008-09, Russia will lead six of the trainings in its Domodedovo Center. If

USNATO 00000609 002 OF 003

funding can be secured, DEA would lead the three mobile trainings in the recipient countries as well as two trainings in the Domodedovo Center in Moscow.

BENEFITS TO UNITED STATES

15. (SBU) The NRC project contributes to top U.S. policy goals of countering the flow of illegal narcotics from Afghanistan by increasing the effectiveness of Central Asian and Afghan drug enforcement efforts. This goal is key to our efforts to stabilize Afghanistan and undermine sources of funding for the Taliban. Through the shoulder-to-shoulder cooperation in the project, DEA can strengthen its drug enforcement contacts with the Central Asian countries, which are all major transit routes for Afghan narcotics. We also gain by working directly with Allied and Russian trainers to create a network of counter-narcotic officials. Through this project, we have seen Russian and Allied trainers improve their methods as they mimic DEA methods.

16. (C) Russia and our Allies share our concern over the threats of Afghan narcotics. At a time when NATO often plays the "bogey man" in Russian domestic politics, it is in our interest to keep Russia engaged at NATO in areas of mutual interest. One by one, we have seen politics extend its arm to meddle or impede the technical work in NRC working groups. The most dramatic exception in 2007 has been counter-narcotics. Thus far, Russia has been an active and constructive partner in this working group. Please note that Russia and our Allies would over-interpret any U.S. reduction from the project through the hyper-sensitive political lense.

17. (C) We have tried to keep the program balanced between the Russian-led and U.S.-led training sessions. Russia has offered to expand its training in 2008-09 from five to six training sessions. Therefore, we believe it absolutely essential to continue U.S. participation at the same levels in 2008-09 as done previously (i.e., 5 training sessions). Allies are supportive of this project -- contributing both

funding and personnel -- but few Allies can provide a full five-man training team. Therefore, without full U.S. participation, the project will effectively become a Russian project with NATO enforcement. This would be counter to our interests in maintaining an active role in the region on this issue.

A FRESH WIND BLOWING FROM PARIS

18. (C) Citing its "red line" on non-military projects at NATO, the French delegation has consistently blocked this type of project, and only allowed the pilot project to go forward in the NRC context because of universal support from Allies and Russia. In the past, France chose not to participate or fund the pilot phase of the project. Now the French NRC representative tells us that he plans to ask Paris to participate in the project in 2008-09. France already conducts bilateral counter-narcotic training in Afghanistan and its participation could provide a boost to balancing the project between NATO and Russia. We should be fully supportive of this initiative to break down French "red lines."

19. (SBU) Post requests OSD and State/INL continue funding the NRC counter-narcotics in Afghanistan and Central Asia for 2008-09 at the same level provided in 2006-07 (i.e., \$300,000 from each Department adjusted for inflation and exchange

USNATO 00000609 003 OF 003

rate).
NULAND